827 Seven senses are distinguished by the Amhara, each centered in an organ:

1. Seeing - "ayn" (lit. eye)
2. Hearing - "jor" (ear)
3. Smelling - "afencha" (nose)
4. Tasting - "af" (mouth)
5. Feeling - "ej" (hand)
6. Walking - "ərər" (leg, foot)
7. Sex sense - "abalä ʷar" (lit. male genital organs; polite term).

[151] The sense of taste is noteworthy because the Amhara often does not distinguish bitter ("mərara") from sour taste ("hʷamata"), which the Westerner does quite readily; the Amhara regards both as "mərara" (bitter). However, the Amhara distinguishes a "soft taste" ("təfət"), typified by "bərz" (honeywater).

828 While these seven senses are located physiologically in corresponding organs, psychological states are regarded as located in the belly or the heart, but in different ways than the Westerner might expect.

The belly ("hod") is considered the seat of emotions:

magnanimous emotions - "hod čʷarəga" (lit. belly lit up like the moon);

fear - "hod babba" (lit. trembling of the belly);

forgetfulness - "hod gäbba" (lit. the belly swallowed it, i.e. lost the thought).

The heart ("leb") is considered the seat of the presence or absence of wisdom:

good judgement - "leb bər" (lit. with a silver heart);

inventive - "leb wälad" (lit. child of the heart; invention);

inactive - "leb mut" (lit. whose heart is dead);

828 imbecility - "leb dafen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

828 201 Certain emotions are expressed by certain patterned physiological signals, often unconsciously:

Anger may be expressed unconsciously by biting the lower lip, or one's finger. Also by knitting the brow ("fir kosättälä"), from the painful expression that results from drinking the purgative drug kosso, so that a person who perpetually goes about with a frown is said to have a face "as if he had eaten kosso", a "kosso face" ("kosso fit"). Melancholy is expressed in a wrinkled facial expression ("fit chändadda").

The symbolic significance of the eye has been referred to in a number of connections. Timidity, and respect in the young, is expressed by "turning the eyes to the dust" ("ayn afar"). Impatience, by shifting the glance rapidly ("ärämmäta"), without making impatient body movements which would be "lower class". Directional signals may be consciously given ("ayn ataqqäsä") by eye movements already described; and observation out of the corner of one's eye ("ayn tärärämmäta") is [754] a finely developed Amhara subtlety. The sorcerer's eye ("yäzäw ayn" lit. "the man's eye," to avoid the sinister name of the "buda" evil spirit) is greatly feared; particularly when it stares and seems to pop ("ayn täroläggälä").

The "left" position is considered the embarassing side ("gera aräbba") (perhaps because the right side is always the honorable, or because it would be embarrassing to place someone so that he would have to take food with the left hand which is used in the toilet). Left-handedness is extremely rare. When some undertaking turns out badly, the saying is "The matter has turned left" ("nägär gera hona").

827 Physiological functions carried out without repression are considered low-class and low-ethnic by the Amhara. Only a low-class

827 person would use direct terms relating to certain body functions: "ar" (fecal matter), "shänna" (he urinated), etc. Polite circumscription is well developed. But the actual carrying out of basic body functions is merely channelled, not repressed, even in "polite society". Farting, e.g., which is almost inevitable after consuming the daily "qolo" (roast peas or barley), is channelled as expressed in the following proberb:

[539] "The Abyssinian is clever;
bowing low (before the great man), he (silently) farts".

Spitting is the inevitable result of masticating the end of the twig used as a toothbrush; but it is not nearly as voluminous as the low-class spitting ("tiq alä", or "entef alä", both alliterations) of the Sudanese ex-slaves (Barya) and Muslim Abyssinians who hold a wad of tobacco between lower lip and gum, chew, and spit.

828 157 In the conceptualization of human personalities, the Amhara take subject matter also from physiological functions and from the ethnic and other divisions of the class structure:

The Rustic (esp. peasant):
"balagär" (lit. man of the rural country), also "balage".
Unpolished, impolite, vulgar.
"wetter" - ignorant person who asks embarassing questions to "inflate his own belly".

The Simple-minded: "yawmh" - simple, good, modest, honest, frank, sincere.
"wedeqät" - (lit. young bull) - simpleton, who causes damage without meaning to; e.g. who cannot hold his tongue.

The Fool: "dongwro" (lit. deaf; deaf-mute) Stupid person whose mind nothing seems to penetrate.

128 diagnostic, and therapeutic practices. The final step of the chapter compares these etiology types with the strategies used by healers for countering the effects of pathogenic agencies.

75 Amhara healer and layman use common sets of phy-
• 827 siological and pathological notions; neither physiology nor pathology is conceived as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right, however. The Amhara does not often verbalize these notions, and, when he does, it is in ad hoc contexts, generally intrinsic to the selection of pmphylaxis or the administration of therapy. Thus, set down on the following pages as discrete subjects, Amhara physiology and pathology appear as collections of relatively simple notions, and of limited explanatory power when compared with the medical systems of other historical civilizations. Unlike those systems, the organization of Amhara medical beliefs and practices is dominated by concepts of practitioner power, its sources
[128] and its therapeutic and prophylactic expressions. Those subjects are dealt with in the remaining chapters of this dissertation

AMHARA PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOGENIC AGENCIES

827 Although most Amhara can identify the grosser body organs by name, even the knowledgeable anatomist can as-

827 sign functions to only a few of these. Among these organs, the heart is considered primary. First, it inspirits and regulates all other organ activity by means of the vital heat which it pulsates and radiates throughout the body. While pulsing within normal frequencies, sufficient heat is generated to sustain good health (tena); more rapid pulsing produces excessive heat which is perceived externally as fever (tukusat). When cardiac hyper-activity is of great intensity and persistence, the heart's ability to exert its authority over the subordinate organs is progressively reduced; this is expressed symptomatically as chronic fatigue and lassitude. In addition to this vitalizing function, the heart controls body movement through the jimat cords, a term including veins, arteries, tendons, and ligaments. The heart is also capable of limited movement downward, backward, and can spin in place. These movements have no febrile effect but since the heart is the seat of the intellect, these motions often lead to mental disorientation and confusion.

Heart and blood share no special tie, nor is the latter's vascular confinement appreciated. Anatomically, the blood is instead associated with a reservoir organ (yidem sir, "blood's root") located at the base of the skull. Functionally, the blood's most specific association is with procreation, for maternal blood is necessary to nourish the homonculus to infancy. Because the re-

quired amounts of blood are continually renewed in fertile women, menstrual effluence is necessary to shed blood not needed between pregnancies. Hence, the cessation of menstrual bleeding at menopause (arowgey) indicates the loss of fertility. Arowgey is only one form of infertility, however, since a woman may be infertile through magical causes even though she continues to menstruate (makan).

The stomach is described as an inert organ housing a colony of wosfat worms. These are usually identified with ascariasis and are believed to transform food and drink into waste. For the host's well-being, their numbers must be sufficient to consume all ingested food; should they become over-abundant, however, hunger and a quarrelsome disposition will drive them to viciously attack accessible body organs.

Beyond these few naturalistic descriptions of organ functioning, the Amhara invokes Divine Providence (yi-Igziyabiher ara) to explain physiological processes, such as the renewal of menstrual blood and the source of vital heat. God further provides that, in the absence of intrusive influences, the parts of the body will function together to maintain a state of harmonious well-being (tena), devoid of pain and characterized by the vigor and physical control commensurate with the individual's age.

Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal,

*753 measles, and smallpox), whooping cough, and occasionally
[843] mumps. Pre-natal contagion, in which a homonculus receives a paternal bašiyta or a fetus contracts a maternal bašiyta via the blood nutriment, is responsible for childhood syphilis and ayni tila. Rabies is the only example of animal-human contagion, the bašiyta being carried by the dog's saliva. Neither likift nor the causation of jaundice through contact with bat urine are examples of telalafiy, since in neither case is the disease agent itself a victim of the ailment.

*753 The body's normal functioning is also disrupted by
825 deviations from acceptable limits of diet, physical activ-
*827 ity, and emotion. Digestive wosfat, for example, are
(192) angered by insufficient food, or food which is stale (injera bread), spoiled (soured talla beer), or improperly prepared (wot stew lacking the customary cayenne). In return, the wosfat rise up to bite the stomach itself, causing pain, bloat, and diarrhea; if these conditions persist, the wosfat will chew their way to the heart, pro-
*753 ducing great local pain, fever, and lassitude. Exces-
827 sive physical exertion is associated with local com-
[828] plaints: Extended walking may dislocate a jimat from its assigned channel (sprain); prolonged weeping can cloud the eye (trachoma and cataracts); extended and arduous thinking produces confusion; much hard labor results in arthritic and rheumatoid complaints. Intense emotions

exercise the heart severely and, if prolonged, portend serious consequences. Deep sorrow, fear, and anger---particularly in response to personal insult---stoke the cardiac fires, whose heat radiates to the lungs where it produces coughing and difficulty in breathing, to the stomach whose aroused wəsfat cause pain and vomiting, and to the blood whose smoldering darkens the complexion. Under these circumstances, the heart cannot function effectively for long; clear thinking becomes difficult and, as the heart dissipates its energies, the body trembles. If these effects continue unabated, cardiac deterioration leads to madness and, eventually, death.

Two illnesses are explainable only epidemiologically: The hot, Sudanic borderlands are associated with malaria, and the damp, cold Semyen heights are linked to a "wind disease" (yinifas basiyta), characterized by shortness of breath, chest pains, excessive saliva, fatigue, and joint pain.

Lastly, the appearance of certain ailments is related to prodromal complaints: Epilepsy preceeds madness; poxes before blindness; catarrh leads to diptheria; syphilis results in blindness, rheumatism, miscarriage, chronic back pain, weak heart (chronic fatigue), and scrofula; measles brings deafness. Although it is frequently assumed that the prodromal essence (basiyta)